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OTE 81-1013

10 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

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FROM: [redacted]  
Director of Training and EducationSUBJECT: Course Report on the Senior Officer  
Development Course

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1. As requested I am forwarding herewith the course report on the initial running of the Senior Officer Development Course. I believe [redacted] has done a thorough job of pointing out both the strengths and weaknesses of the course as it was run.

2. I realize this report because of its thoroughness is rather lengthy; however, I feel it is important that it be available to you as a reference document in connection with our discussions concerning the future of this endeavor.

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Attachment:  
Course Report wo/attachments

Unclassified When  
Separated From Attachment

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6 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training and Education

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FROM: [REDACTED] Chairman  
Senior Officer Development Course

SUBJECT: Course Report on the Senior Officer  
Development Course, 19 October 1980 -  
13 February 1981

SUMMARY:

1. The first running of the Senior Officer Development Course was judged to be a success by both the staff and the class members. At the same time, both groups had several suggestions for improvement.

2. This course was requested by the then DCI, Admiral Turner, who monitored its progress very carefully. In fact, he assigned his Special Assistant to pay particular attention to the course syllabus to make sure that his ideas were properly incorporated. In essence, the DCI wanted a course that would broaden the students and give them a better realization of just where they fitted into the intelligence process as a whole. He wanted them to learn things in the course that would be useful to them five years hence. He insisted that the principles of intelligence be carefully examined and that the course not delve into substance or current events. Most importantly, he wanted the students to work hard and to be given assignments that would be challenging to them because he felt that only in this way would they retain what they learned. He was especially interested in the case study approach as developed at the Harvard Business School. This objective was achieved through a number of small group exercises and a number of essays on intelligence techniques and on books about intelligence that were levied on the course members.

3. The course ran for 17 weeks and was divided equally into four blocks--Production, (which includes the national and international setting in which intelligence operated and the way in which the product is used by the consumer), Collection,

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Analysis and Management. Because of the number of holidays that occurred during the course, especially the Christmas period, the group was actually in session 15 weeks, the first and last of which were spent [redacted] where evening sessions were also scheduled. There were no trips, as had been the case in previous courses, with the exception of a half day at NSA and a half day examining captured Soviet equipment at Bolling Air Force Base.

4. We did not have a great deal of time to prepare for the course but in my judgment it really was just as well because we knew basically what we wanted to do. It was a question of getting the right reading materials, the right people to participate in the panel discussions and some good case studies along with developing some innovative ideas about presenting material. Any first running is bound to have some rough edges. This one was no exception and we will treat this subject further in the recommendations.

5. The course profited from having a very enthusiastic staff who realized they were attempting to break some new ground in a course of this kind and went all out to make it a success. We were fortunate in having assigned to us very capable officers on loan from three of the four directorates. They paved the way for the support we needed from their respective directorates. The one exception was the S&T Directorate where we had the part-time services of an officer as needed. Incidentally, this particular officer was the one who persuaded the Director to embark on the course in the first place. He felt that students were not sufficiently challenged when they sit passively listening to lecturers.

6. The course also benefited from having a group of officers in it who worked well together and who also got along well with each other. We assigned readings and essays to be completed before the class began so that we could launch right into small group exercises. In this way, all the members were fully engaged from the start and we were lucky that the composition of the small groups had the right mix of people.

7. The course that perhaps most closely resembles this one is the Senior Seminar which had been running two times a year for nine years and was designed to broaden out supergrades. That Seminar ran for nine weeks and was broken up by a one week trip to some American city organized by the Domestic Contacts Division of the Directorate of Operations. In recent years, however, the Senior Seminar had begun to languish a bit because people being

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sent to it were of lower grades and many of them were not of the highest potential. We believe we were able to take the good things from this previous course and use them in the new course while at the same time providing a greater challenge to the students. The course by its nature was narrowly focused. We concentrated primarily on the Agency rather than on the intelligence community or the government as a whole or the society in which we live.

8. One strong point that should be mentioned is the proportional representation from all directorates and the "E" Career Service. It was particularly important that we have a strong contingent from the Directorate of Operations because in recent years this directorate, feeling the pinch of experienced manpower, had not been sending its full quota of officers to the Senior Seminar. This course indeed did have a strong contingent from the DDO. Five of its officers were among the top seven participants.

9. We scheduled some guest lectures for evening sessions with wives and these seemed to be well received. We also invited two people who had not been invited back since their retirement, Sherman Kent and Richard Helms, both of whom performed extremely well and were glad for the opportunity to do so.

10. Perhaps the most stimulating thing about this experience was the level of effort that the students maintained throughout the entire course. We had expected a let down along the way but it did not occur. This was a highly motivated group with each member seeming to want to prove to his peers that he and the unit from which he came were capable of excellent and useful performances.

11. We were all quite impressed with the cooperation we got from all the Agency offices that we contacted for help. We also now have graduates who know what we are trying to do and who are eager to help us in the future. We intend to call upon them as needed.

12. At annex (1 to 4) are more detailed analyses of the product, collection, analysis and management blocks compiled by the Block Directors plus the class composite (5) the class members (6) and the schedule (7).

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## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. It is the belief of the staff and for that matter the students that this course should continue and that it serve as a replacement for the former Senior Seminar. We think that there should be two runnings a year in the Fall and in the Spring of approximately 12 weeks duration. We would expect to cut out some of the things that didn't work as well as some fat, some duplication, and quite a bit of the theoretical material on management. A majority of the students, in fact, had already had management training and in any event it is available in other courses sponsored by this office. (We did, nevertheless, make an effort not to duplicate any other course in management currently offered.)

2. There was only one woman in this group and we think for future courses there should be more. Also, we would like to cut back the number from 24 to 20 because facilities are strained with a higher number. We also believe that the members should continue to be people of high potential who have been earmarked for entry into the Senior Intelligence Service and that is the way we propose to treat them. In the first group there were an equal number of 14s and 15s and we think there should be more of the latter who are closer to SIS entry.

3. It is clear that we threw too much reading material at them, particularly at the outset. We were also not as specific as we should have been in fitting the readings to the particular exercises and differentiating among the readings that were mandatory and useful. We also tried to cram too many subjects into too short a space of time. We will just have to recognize that we cannot keep all the things that ideally might be covered in a course of this kind. We should do fewer things and do them more thoroughly.

4. A feature that was very important to this learning experience was the member presentation of each individual student. We should work even more closely with the students in arriving at a topic for them to present to the class that will fit in with our overall program. Also, we should require each student during the course to do an individual research report on a subject mutually agreed upon by the staff and

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the student based on his experience and his familiarity with the problem involved.

5. The course members complained that there was a lack of emphasis upon substantive intelligence matters and a high concentration on the process of intelligence. We did manage to sneak some substance in under the tent but not enough. We should do more on the Soviet Union and other substantive areas but without losing sight of our original goals. We will also want to tinker with the order in which the material is presented, for example, Analysis should come ahead of Collection.

6. Another criticism from the course members was that we should have had heard more from high level consumers outside the Agency, particularly from State and the Department of Defense. We did of course have some of these speakers but the class really got interested in what happens to all this production effort in the Agency, who uses it and how can these consumers be better served. They were also very concerned about arriving at some method of evaluating what we do while recognizing the difficulty of such a task.

7. Although great stress was laid on small group activity, the members felt that we should do even more of this because it was the best way to absorb the materials. All of the students felt that this method rather than the lecture approach was the best way to absorb knowledge. The small group also gives each student a better chance to participate than is the case in the full plenary sessions where a few individuals seem to monopolize the air time. The staff felt, and some of the students echoed this, that we did not project enough into the future and we will want to look at this question more carefully. In our business it is not an easy thing to do. We did have the benefit of the work of the Executive Committee Staff but that seemed to be very hard to grapple with meaningfully. All the course members to the last man complained that they were cooped up too long and should have gotten out on more trips. We agree with them up to a point. It is a question of whether the time can be better spent in the classroom or on the road, especially in a course of reduced length and we do not want to go too far in the other direction.

8. Surprisingly enough, in a group of this sort, a few of the members felt that we did not give them sufficient material on the current organization of the Agency. We assumed that they

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knew and would be bored to death with the wiring diagrams. In any event, it is a simple matter to handle this problem in the beginning of the course.

9. Several members felt that we should have had a real-life exercise at the end to try and bring some of the material together. One, for example, suggested a simulation of a Soviet invasion of Poland. We had originally considered this but did not pursue it because of the pressure of time.

10. There was some concern that we dipped too deeply into the world of S&T in trying to come to grips with such things as orbital mechanics. Others from S&T itself felt we had not handled the work of their directorate as well as we might. We must review this segment carefully. The lectures and exercises on ethics did not come off very well and need to be cut back and revamped.

11. The students, somewhat to my surprise, were particularly interested in the debates that we organized and most of them felt that we should do more of these.

12. After some false starts we spent more time on the student essays on the assigned books to the point where they provided a good learning experience. We did this by keeping the members in small groups and dissecting the essays one by one pointing out good and bad points therein. The students had claimed early on that we had not devoted sufficient attention to critiquing these essays relative to the effort they had put in on them and they were probably right.

13. There was reportedly some resistance to this course in the beginning. We think we have overcome this and, bearing in mind the critiques of the staff and the students, we think the second go-round will be better. This is a difficult comment to make because there is always something special about the first running of a course and this was no exception. We will certainly profit by the lessons learned but some of the spontaneity will disappear.

14. In short, we have the core of an excellent course and we do not want to throw out the baby with the bath water. We should not lose sight of the observation made by one of the students on his final course critique "No course is infallible. By the same token no student should dictate to the teacher what he should be taught. A student goes to school to learn and is not always in the position to know what is good for him."